

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 AGRE-00 AID-05 EB-08 USIA-15
COME-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03 /063 W
-----039637 181300Z /43

R 171718Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9603
INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ROME

UNCLAS TUNIS 0375

ROME FOR FOODAG

RABAT FOR AGATT KUHL

DEPT PASS USDA, AID

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, TS
SUBJECT: TUNISIAN AGRICULTURAL SITUATION. DROUGHT SEVERELY
AFFECTING LIVESTOCK, CEREALS THREATENED

REF: TUNIS 180 (NOTAL)

1. TUNISIA IS IN SEVERE DROUGHT. POTENTIALLY, AGRICULTURAL SITUATION COULD BE MORE SERIOUS THAN LAST YEAR'S LOSS OF NEARLY 50 PERCENT OF GRAIN CROP. BOTH CEREALS AND DRYLAND FORAGE PLANTINGS ARE SUFFERING FROM LACK OF WATER IN SOIL PROFILE THROUGHOUT DRYLAND CORPPING REGIONS AS RESULT OF INADEQUATE PRECIPITATION FROM JANUARY 1977 TO PRESENT.

2. LIVESTOCK FEED SITUATION ALREADY IS CRITICAL AND ANIMALS ARE BEING RUSHED TO MARKET. CEREAL CROP COULD BE ALMOST TOTAL LOSS UNLESS ADEQUATE RAIN IS
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FORTHCOMING WITHIN NEXT FEW WEEKS.

3. THIS IS CONSENSUS OF OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY LOCAL AGRICULTURAL AGENTS AND FARMERS TO USAID/TUNIS ASSISTANT AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER ON FIELD TRIP LAST WEEK THROUGHOUT DRYLAND (RAINFED) AGRICULTURAL AREAS OF TUNISIA, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS COUNTERPART

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL. THEY STUDIED PRE-SENT CROPPING SITUATION REGARDING BOTH LIVESTOCK FORAGE AND FEEDSTUFFS SITUATION AS WELL AS OUTLOOK FOR CEREALS CROP IN AREA EXTENDING FROM TUNIS IN NORTH TO GAFSA IN SOUTHEAST PART OF COUNTRY.

4. GOT IS TAKING EMERGENCY MEASURES IN RESPECT TO LIVESTOCK, INCLUDING IMPORTATION OF FODDER BY NATIONAL LIVESTOCK OFFICE. HOWEVER, BOTH IN TERMS OF TIME-LINESS AND VOLUME, IMPORTS ARE LIKELY TO REACH ONLY FRACTION OF LIVESTOCK POPULATION (1976 TOTALS: 5.8 MILLION SHEEP, 900 THOUSAND CATTLE, 88 THOUSAND GOATS, 288 THOUSAND DONKEYS, HORSES AND MULES AND 103 THOUSAND CAMELS).

5. AGRICULTURE CONTRIBUTES 20 PERCENT OF TUNISIA'S \$5 BILLION GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 40 PERCENT OF EMPLOYMENT. LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IS MOST IMPORTANT SUB-SECTOR, FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY CEREALS. MULCAHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LIVESTOCK, DROUGHTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TUNIS00375
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780026-0818
Format: TEL
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780153/aaaabshj.tel
Line Count: 82
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e1becfe2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 TUNIS 180
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3759216
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TUNISIAN AGRICULTURAL SITUATION. DROUGHT SEVERELY AFFECTING LIVESTOCK, CEREALS THREATENED
TAGS: EAGR, TS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e1becfe2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014